

Bank Street, banking, and other tales of old Suffolk

The first in a series about Bank Street.

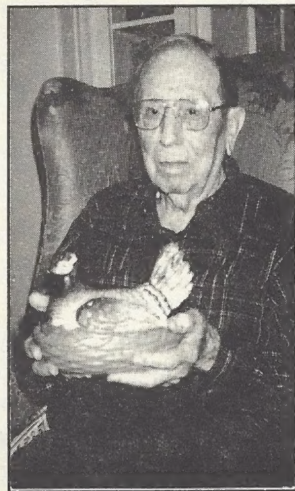


Photo by Euell Williams.

Sometime around 1868 in the difficult period following the War, Confederate veteran Col. John Copeland and his daughter Catherine Copeland (Riddick) set out on a journey from Nansemond County into what had recently been enemy territory. Col. Copeland's wife, Judith, was the granddaughter of Capt. John Dorlon who had come to Nansemond County

during the Revolutionary War and had remained here and made his home in old South Quay.

Col. Copeland's wife had received word of an inheritance due her from the Dorlon family in Hampstead, New York. Col. Copeland and his daughter must have traveled by every means then available--horse and buggy, steamship, train, ferry, and horse drawn coach--to reach their destination on Long Island. At the conclusion of the Copeland's visit, the Dorlons asked Catherine if she would care to carry a memento from the family home. She chose a majolica chicken. Her mother's inheritance of about \$4,000 was put in the chicken which was then carefully wrapped for Catherine to carry on her lap on the long journey back home.



Dr. Beverly Long Holladay holds the majolica chicken that carried the money.
Photo by Betsy Brothers.

It was the money in the chicken that Col. Copeland used when he, Dr. W. B. Wellons, and Willis Riddick started the **Farmers Bank of Nansemond**. The men applied for a charter in 1869 and the bank opened its doors on the first day of 1870.

At first, the bank rented a spare room in B. F. Cutchins' Clothing Store on West Washington Street.

Before long business was good enough to warrant a move to a little building on Main Street where Suffolk's first bank, the Suffolk Savings Bank, had operated for a time. It had closed at the start of the War, never to reopen.

Chartered Nov. 30, 1869.

The Farmers Bank of Nansemond

CAPITAL, \$20,000. SURPLUS, \$30,000

President, JOHN R. COPELAND. Cashier, WM. H. JONES, Jr.

DIRECTORS:

JOHN R. COPELAND, THOS. W. SMITH, E. E. HOLLAND, R.H. RAWLES,
JAMES R. BAKER, WM. H. JONES, JR.

Transacts a General Banking Business. Collections made on all accessible points at lowest rates. Business accounts invited and interest allowed on time deposits.

The bank at the head of Bank Street. This building was used by the Suffolk Savings Bank before the War Between the States and then by the Farmers Bank until 1899.

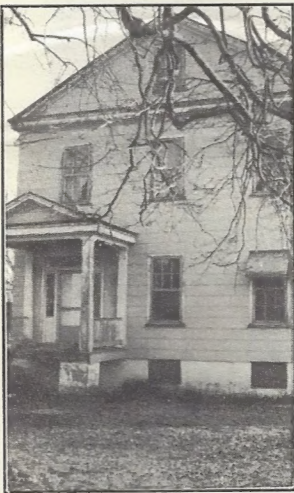
That bank building was in what is now the 100 block of North Main Street (roughly where Barr Brothers is today). The street that opened across from the bank was named, logically enough, "Bank Street." The Farmers Bank would be the only bank in town for more than 25 years.

Col. Copeland had been born on the Holland Road, nearer Holland than Suffolk. After their marriage he and Mrs. Copeland moved to a house closer to Suffolk but still several miles out of town. That distance became something of a problem when he



This often photographed, picturesque house stood in a field near Holland until recently. This was where Col. John Copeland grew up. Drawing by J. B. Pruden.

launched his banking business because, as cashier, he was responsible for removing all the money every night and carrying it home for safe keeping. His family was very concerned about his traveling with a cash box under his buggy seat. The decision was made to move to town.



This house at 2821 Holland Road was the home of Col. and Mrs. Copeland before they moved to Bank Street. Photo by Dana Adams.

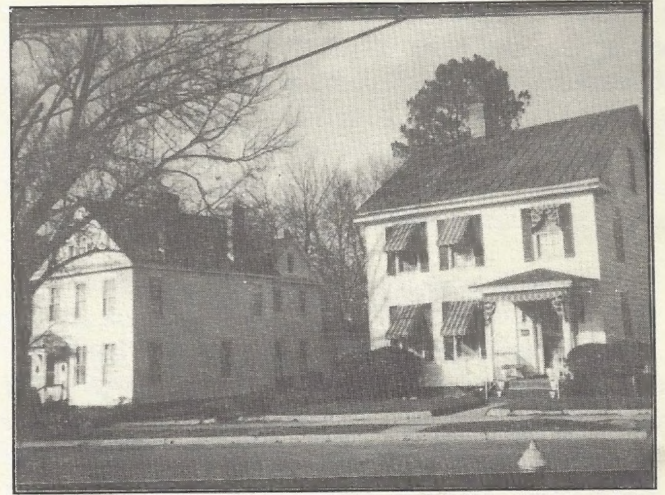
Col. Copeland bought a large piece of land at the east end of Bank Street at the edge of town. The lot extended from Pinner Street east to what is now Holladay Street (named for Copeland's son-in-law) and from Bank Street north to present day Finney Avenue. He built a house, a barn, and a smokehouse and he kept cows, chickens, and horses.

Soon after he built his town house, Col. Copeland built two simpler houses (310 & 312 Bank Street) beside his home. The two were connected by a colonnade and here Mrs. Quimby and Miss Mundie conducted a school for Col. Copeland's grandchildren and the children and grandchildren of his friends. Later, the two teachers went to work at another private school in town and the buildings became family homes.

Before long, Col. Copeland hired young William Jones and trained him to be cashier. He sold William Jones a corner of his land. Jones built a home there at the corner of Bank and Pinner Streets.

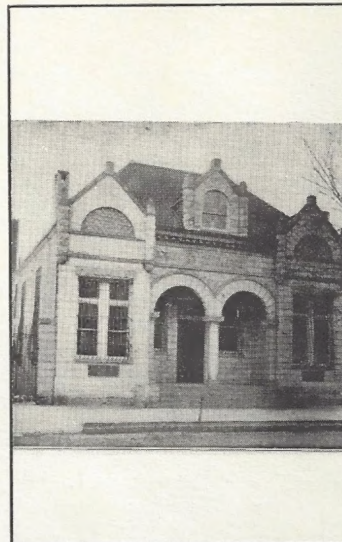
In the early days, the Farmers Bank was a real neighborhood concern. The directors in 1890 were

John Copeland of 314 (now numbered 318) Bank Street, Tom Smith of Franklin Street (house now demolished), E. E. Holland of 216 Bank Street, (Judge) R. H. Rawles of Bank Street (house now demolished), James E. Baker (Does anybody know where he lived?), and William Jones of 302 Bank Street.

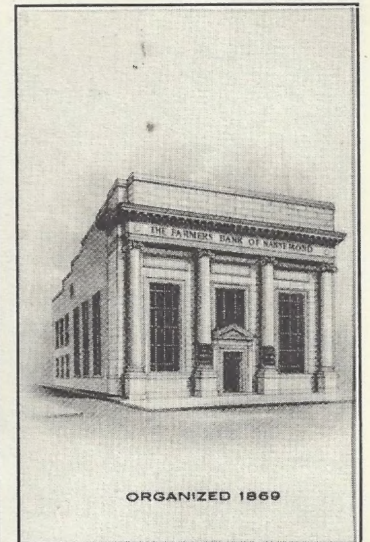


The house Col. Copeland built in town (right) with one of the school buildings. Photo by Euell Williams.

By 1899, the bank had grown enough to merit a new building nearer the Square (the intersection of Main and Washington Streets). The *Suffolk News-Herald* described it as "one of the handsomest of its kind in the state and constructed of Georgia granite. The floor is Egyptian mosaic, while the furnishings are finely carved quartered oak and bronze" (from *Suffolk: A Pictorial History* by Hobbs and Pacquette).



This was the Farmers Bank a century ago.



This new facade was put on the Farmers Bank building in 1922.

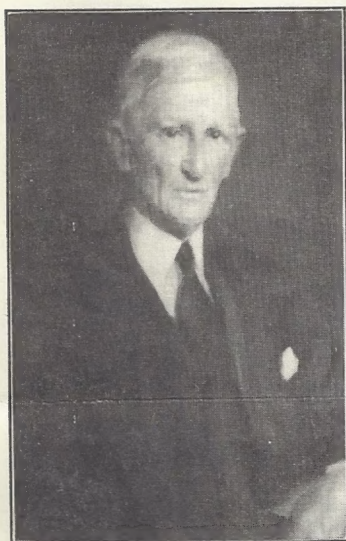
In 1922, the building was given a new, classical facade. This building was used until 1966 when the present building was constructed. After several name changes, the bank is known today as **Crestar**.

Thanks to Dr. Beverly Long Holladay and to Linda Doland of Crestar Bank.

The National Bank of Suffolk

The following is a portion of the history that was presented in December by Chris Abbott of what is today NationsBank at a celebration of 100 years of service in Suffolk.

In 1899, several local community leaders came together to create a financial institution to serve a small but growing rural area that included the small City of Suffolk and the larger County of Nansemond. Among those men was a young and prominent local attorney names James L. McLemore. Judge McLemore was 36 years old in 1899 when along with Thomas Birdsong, A. Wolford, as cashier, R. Howard, R. A. Pretlow, J. A. Pretlow, C. A. Shoop, and W. R. Withers opened the Bank of Suffolk. Its initial capital resource was \$6,200.



Judge James L. McLemore was president of the National Bank for 52 years.



This beautiful building with the distinctive gold coins was constructed in 1916.

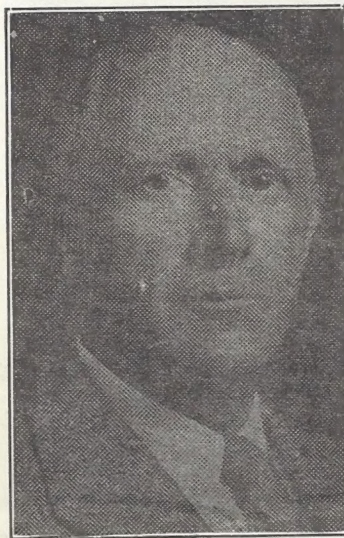
In 1910, the bank became a nationally chartered institution and changed the name to the National Bank of Suffolk. At the time the population of Suffolk was 3,000. Judge McLemore would serve as president of the bank until his retirement in 1951.

In 1916, the National Bank of Suffolk moved into the building at the corner of North Main and West Washington Streets where it remained until the present structure was built in the mid '60s. (SNHS note: That building still stands and is know as "the one with the coins." It is an office building now.)

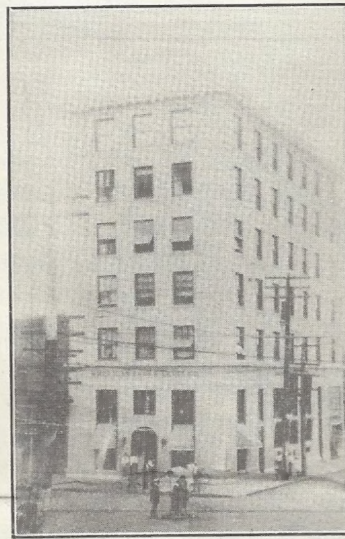
Upon Judge McLemore's retirement, he was succeeded by Jack Nurney. Mr. Nurney's tenure lasted until his retirement in 1966 from what had now become Virginia National Bank. (SNHS note: The bank, now known as NationsBank, is at the corner of Saratoga and West Washington Streets.)

The American Bank

Ernest E. Jones' first job was as a runner for Farmers Bank. As a very young man he had a great interest in banking. Although another bank bore the name Farmers Bank, Mr. Jones saw a need for an institution which truly did cater to the agricultural community on which so much of our local economy depended. On October 1, 1912, the American Bank opened its doors. The bank first used office space on Saratoga Street but very soon a new building was constructed (today known as the Professional Building).



Mr. Ernest Jones was 21 when the American Bank opened.



This very early picture of the American Bank predates the clock that was part of downtown for decades. Photo courtesy of Ann Hurff Ballard.

Mr. Jones had spent a great deal of time traveling through the countryside by horse and buggy visiting with farmers and tradesmen and gathering support for the new bank before it opened. But Mr. Jones was still quite young (only 23), so when the time came to elect officers, the bank board elected an older man, B. L. Saunders, as president. Mr. Jones was elected cashier at first and would later be president.

This was very much a family business with Ernest Jones' brother, Herman, handling the insurance department and their sister, Martha, working in the bank as well. In 1918, every male employee with more than fourteen months of service to the bank was called into active duty in World War I. It was Martha Jones who kept business going on as usual.

For many years the bank had an agricultural department. They also offered student savings accounts and other "user friendly" features absent from the other two older banks.

In 1962, a new building was constructed at the corner of North Main and Market Streets. A small branch office remained in the old building until 1973. Today the bank is known as **Central Fidelity**.

Much of this information is from a 1937 Suffolk News-Herald article supplied by Cathy Stancil. Thanks also to Mrs. L. H. Rawls, Mrs. Annette J. Birdsong, and Mr. E. T. Jakeman.

The Phoenix Bank of Nansemond

According to Kermit Hobbs' *Pictorial History*, the Phoenix Bank of Nansemond was established in 1911 by John Waverly Richardson, a black man, for the black population of Suffolk and Nansemond County. Mr. Richardson was included in Ripley's *Believe It or Not* when, as the bank of which he was president was just becoming established, he worked as a janitor at another bank (the American Bank and Trust Company). Unfortunately, the Depression took its toll and in 1937 Mr. Richardson's bank closed. The building still stands on East Washington Street.

The Bank of Suffolk

This bank, the only locally owned bank still operating, is quite young by Suffolk standards. The Bank of Suffolk opened in 1967. G. P. Jackson was and is chairman of the board. The first directors were G. P. Jackson, W. Oscar Jones, W. C. Joyner, Herbert Clay, and Curtis Johnson. R. H. Braford was the first president.

A Lafayette Note

Each year at this time, we enjoy remembering the 1825 visit of Lafayette, the great French hero of the American Revolution. Dr. Beverly Long Holladay and his son John are the only people in Suffolk that we know who can name two ancestors who entertained the great man while he was here.

Dr. Holladay's great-great-grandfather, Joseph Holladay, was the innkeeper who prepared the banquet for the General's one night stay. The next day, another great-great-grandfather of Dr. Holladay, John Dorlon, entertained his old friend of Revolution days at Piney Pleasant, Dorlon's home at South Quay in Nansemond County.

John Dorlon was the grandfather of Judith Ann Hunter Copeland (Mrs. John Copeland) whose husband helped to establish the Farmers Bank.



"The Square" (c. 1930)

Please note the banks, City Market, clock, trees, street lights, and on-street parking.



Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

P.O. Box 1255
Suffolk, Virginia 23439-1255

January 23, 1998

Mr. Myles E. Standish
City Manager
P. O. Box 1858
Suffolk, VA 23439

Dear Myles,

Since its inception in 1966, the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society has worked to preserve local history and make it accessible to all. Throughout these thirty years, the Society has amassed a rather extensive and varied collection of artifacts, books and photographs. Each item relates to and tells a part of our rich history.

Members of the Society were instrumental in saving Riddick's Folly, where we rent two rooms on the top floor to serve as a repository for our collections.

We are out of space and constantly forfeit the opportunity to receive relevant items. This problem reached the critical stage years ago, and we must find a solution.

At this time, the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society would like to make a formal request to the City of Suffolk to be considered in the future plans for the adaptive reuse of the 1837 Nansemond County Courthouse. We feel it would be the best location, between historic Constant's Wharf and Riddick's Folly, for a Suffolk Museum, archive and research library--a place to tell and properly protect Suffolk's long history. Being reliable custodians of our past is an enormous and very serious undertaking.

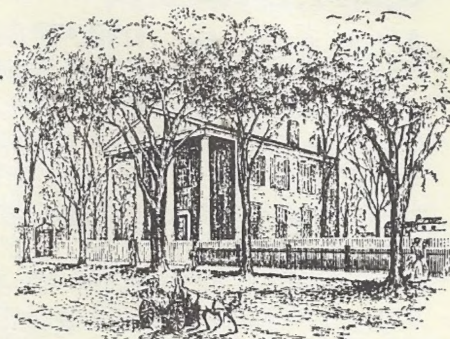
Using this fine old courthouse as a facility to preserve and tell our history would be a priceless gift to future generations. Together we can make this happen.

We would very much like an opportunity to talk with you about this proposal.

With enthusiasm for our future, I remain

Very truly yours,

Betsy W. Brothers, President



Nansemond County Court House, 1839, Suffolk, Virginia

Please friends - We need your help to make this a reality!

Please write or call your Suffolk City Council representatives to express support of using the old Nansemond Co. Courthouse as our headquarters and museum.

Mayor Thomas G. Underwood
Holy Neck Borough
P. O. Box 7084
Suffolk, VA 23437
657-6368

Vice Mayor Charles F. Brown
Cypress Borough
1342 Devonshire Court
Suffolk, VA 23434
934-0940

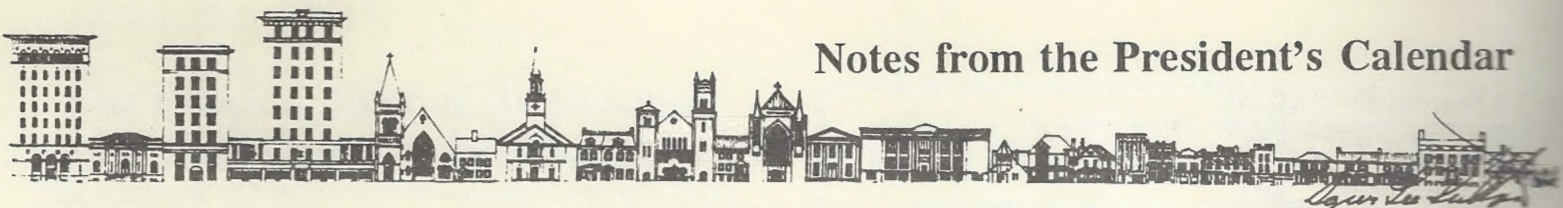
Joseph H. Barlow
Chuckatuck Borough
8204 Longvue Circle
Suffolk, VA 23436
238-2062

Leroy Bennett
Nansemond Borough
2004 Nansemond Parkway
Suffolk, VA 23434
538-8144

J. Samuel Carter
Suffolk Borough
411 Bosley Avenue
Suffolk, VA 23434
539-5847

Curtis R. Milteer
Whaleyville Borough
1680 Airport Road
Suffolk, VA 23434
934-0630

Marian B. Rogers
Sleepy Hole Borough
3728 Concord Drive
Suffolk, VA 23435
484-6001



Notes from the President's Calendar

♦ **Sept. 16** — Worked on October newsletter and Christmas Candlelight Tour.

♦ **Sept. 18** — Sue Woodward and I worked on the Christmas Candlelight Tour brochure.

♦ **Sept. 22** — Sue and I proofread the newsletter.

♦ **Sept. 23** — Sue and I worked on **Suffolk High School Program** for October SNHS meeting and went to Isle of Wight to **Scott Farmstead**.

♦ **Sept. 24** — Sue and I worked on tour brochure and I later attended the first **Greater Downtown Suffolk Development Committee** meeting.

♦ **Sept. 25** — We went back to the country to visit with people opening their homes for tour.

♦ **Sept. 29** — Dana Adams, Linda Consolvo, Mary Lawrence Harrell, Irene Pinner, and I prepared newsletters for mailing. We were proud of this Back to School issue and congratulate Sue Woodward for her hard work. Also, thanks to Elizabeth Gordon and Sylvia Pond who patiently deciphered and typed our hand-written scribbling.

♦ **Sept. 30** — Hurrah! Newsletters were mailed--if you've ever mailed hundreds of items by "bulk mail" you understand the "Hurrah!" Also, Andy Maxey, Elliot Drew from the library, and I met with City Manager Myles Standish and Assistant City Manager Jim Vacalis about our space needs for a **Historical Society Research Library**.

♦ **Oct. 2** — Lee Hart, Charles Johnson, Sue Woodward, and I surprised Kermit Hobbs when we visited him and announced that he had been chosen to receive the **Marion Joyner Watson History Award**.

♦ **Oct. 6** — Off to the Isle of Wight Museum with Sylvia Pond to visit their museum where we attended a **genealogy workshop**. Later, we had a SNHS Board meeting with a focus on the Christmas Tour.

♦ **Oct. 8** — Barbara McPhail and I worked on signs for the tour.

♦ **Oct. 9, 10, & 13** — Pattie Jack, Lee King, Sue, and I put together the SHS exhibit at Riddick's Folly. (It was very well attended and received.)

♦ **Oct. 13** — SNHS Annual Meeting at Riddick's Folly. Several decades of SHS alumni told stories and reminisced about the "good ole days." What fun!

♦ **Oct. 14** — Dana Adams and I made the rounds and sold ads to offset expenses for the tour brochure.

♦ **Oct. 16** — Sue and I sold more ads in Windsor. (We greatly appreciate the generosity of these businesses.)

♦ **Oct. 17** — Georgellen Monette, Pat Snyder, and I met at Indika Farms to plan for Tour Gift Shop.

♦ **Oct. 19 & 20** — Worked on tour brochure.

♦ **October 22** — **Greater Downtown Suffolk Development Committee** meeting at St. Paul's Church.

♦ **Oct. 24** — Sue and I joined Gerard Dawson at his beautiful home on Bank Street. Gerard has kindly given the Society many pictures and other memorabilia from his family.

♦ **Oct. 27** — I met with Bill Ashley, George Barnett, Assistant City Manager Cindy Rohlf, and the **Director of the Dismal Swamp in Suffolk** to discuss promotional ideas for Suffolk and especially the Swamp.

♦ **Oct. 28 & 29** — Dana Adams, Linda Consolvo, and I attended a Garden Club of Virginia sponsored **Preservation Forum** in Fredericksburg, Virginia. We later toured Fredericksburg and attended a lecture by Shelby Foote about the Civil War.

♦ **Nov. 1** — Linda Consolvo, Sue Woodward, and I helped set up and decorate tables at NSA to prepare for the banquet in honor of Kermit Hobbs.

♦ **Nov. 4** — Linda Consolvo, Pattie Crow, Elizabeth Gordon, Barbara McPhail, Jane Moore, Irene Pinner, Janice Thomas, Sue, and I spent the day preparing 1,200 tour brochures for bulk mailing.

♦ **Nov. 10** — SNHS Board meeting.

♦ **Nov. 12** — Janice Thomas, Sue, and I headed to Scott Farmstead with greens, hats, dresses, and hoop skirts. The photo session was great fun. We dressed up Janice, Dot Gwaltney, and Peggy Wright.

♦ **Nov. 13** — George Consolvo held a **Save Our Station** meeting to discuss the station project.

♦ **Nov. 14** — Met photographers at Indika Farms and later Barbara McPhail and I met with realtor Harry Cross about College Court concerns.

♦ **Nov. 17** — Linda Consolvo, Sue, and I joined Mary Darden and the tour house chairmen to discuss tour details.

♦ **Nov. 18** — I gave a program about Main Street and historic preservation to the **Sans Souci Book Club**.

♦ **Nov. 21** — Back to the country to the Darden Farmstead and Exeter Place for tour photos.

♦ **Nov. 25** — Riddick's Folly hosted an area workshop for the **Virginia Department of Historic Resources**. Several of our board members attended.

♦ **Dec. 2 & 3** — **Greater Downtown Development Committee** had meetings at St. Paul's Church. These gatherings were informative and exciting. We watched and listened to Ray Gindroz and colleagues create new ideas to help us solve old problems.

♦ **Dec. 4** — Linda Consolvo, Lloyd March, and I cut greens for tour.

♦ **Dec. 5** — Members of Nansemond River Garden Club, Riverview Garden Club, Suffolk Garden Club, and Westover Garden Club spent the day decorating the houses open for the Candlelight Tour. Thank you all for a job well done!

♦ **Dec. 6 & 7 — Candlelight Tour** — A wonderful tour along country roads in old Nansemond County and Isle of Wight. Beautiful historic homes and churches, gracious people, and great decorations made this year's tour one of the best ever!

♦ **Dec. 16 — Everett Birdsong, Donald Long** from Public Works, and I met in regards to the **Save Our Station** project. Also, **Assistant City Manager Steve Herbert, Barbara McPhail**, and I met to discuss the two Leggett houses north of the station.

♦ **Dec. 17** — I spoke to the **City Council** to endorse the new **Downtown Suffolk Initiatives Plan**.

♦ **Dec. 18 — George Barnett** invited me to attend a **Suffolk Tomorrow** breakfast. The program was about the greater Hampton Roads.

♦ **Jan. 5 — SNHS Board meeting.** **Assistant City Manager for Development Steve Herbert** joined us to discuss the Leggett houses on Main Street.

♦ **Jan. 12** — Preservation meeting to discuss plans for the **May 17, 1998 Preservation Day Celebration**. The city, **Riddick's Folly**, **SNHS**, and a few others are making plans for this year's festivities.

♦ **Jan. 23** — I attended a **Downtown Suffolk Association Board meeting.** **Everett Birdsong** and I joined **Katherine Pearson** and **Donald Long** from the city staff, and showed the station to several architectural firms. Also, I wrote letters to the City Manager about the old Nansemond County Courthouse (see copy in newsletter) and the old City Hall bell.

♦ **Jan. 26** — Another Preservation Day meeting.

♦ **Jan. 27 — Riddick's Folly Board meeting.**

♦ **Jan. 30** — I attended the **Downtown Committee Retreat** and saw the final plans. The suggestions to call Constant's Wharf "Founder's Place" was short lived.

♦ **Feb. 4** — We received 10 architectural proposals for the station. The committee of six (three city employees and three Historical Society members) have a week to study and score these plans.

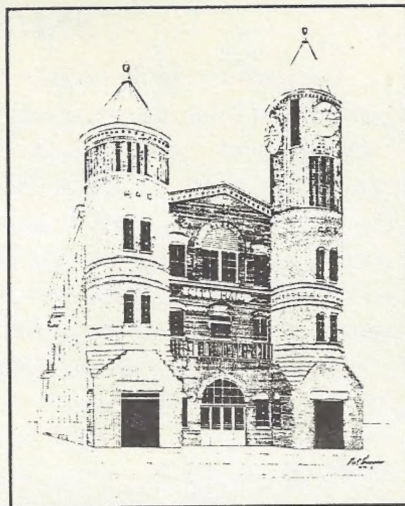
♦ **Feb. 6 — Elizabeth Gordon** and I mailed membership letters to present members and prospective members.

♦ **Feb. 9** — A busy day. Preservation Day meeting and also an opportunity to join the **Suffolk Tomorrow Committee** and hear **City Planning Director Paul Fisher's** presentation for the new Comprehensive Plan. That night, our monthly **SNHS Board** meeting was held.

♦ **Feb. 11** — Turned in proposals for architects. On March 5 and 6, the committee will interview four firms for the architectural and engineering work on the **Main Street Train Station** restoration.

♦ **Feb. 12 — Jack Harry, Steve Huber, Barbara McPhail, Pret Pretlow, John and Sallie Sebrell**, and I met to discuss College Court concerns.

♦ **Feb. 17** — Sue and I met with **Parks Duffy**, an artist who lives in Petersburg and does paintings of "city scenes."



Old City Hall and Market

♦ **Feb. 24 — G.S. Hobbs, Lee King**, and I met with **Myles Standish, Steve Herbert, Jim Vacalis**, and **Dinesh Tiwari**. We discussed the possibility of having a mural of the old **City Hall and Market** painted on the side of G.S.'s store. This would be enjoyed from the street as well as from the mini-park.

♦ **Feb. 28** — The **Riddick's Folly Ball** was a smashing success. This fundraiser was chaired by **Pam Pruden** and **Kathy Pond**. **Julie Holland, Karen Jones, Gary Koziol, Pat McConnell, Georgellen Monette**, and **Natalie Parker** tended to the details that made the ball a financial success as well as an evening to remember. Congratulations, **Riddick's Folly**!

♦ **Mar. 2** — Back to the Seaboard Station to show the interior to architects from a Norfolk firm. This building, even in its sad state, creates respect and admiration from everyone who examines it. The architectural features are unique, ornate, and beautiful. Several of us met for another **Preservation Day meeting** and that evening the society held a board meeting.

♦ **Mar. 4 — Everett Birdsong**, co-chairman of the **Save Our Station Ad Hoc Committee**, held a well attended meeting. Hiring of an architect, adaptive reuse, and other matters were discussed.

♦ **Mar. 5 & 6 — Everett Birdsong** and I from the **SOS Committee**, along with **Lynette Brugeman, Donald Long**, and **Katherine Pearson** from the City, interviewed four architectural firms. These firms have been asked to submit a non-binding estimate of price for the needed services. These estimates are to be submitted by March 18. They will be reviewed and an architect will be hired as quickly as possible.

♦ **Mar. 9 — Chip Wilkinson**, a mural artist who grew up in Suffolk, met with **Lee King, G. S. Hobbs, Jim Vacalis, Dinesh Tiwari**, and me to discuss the idea of painting a mural of the old city market on the north wall of G. S.'s store. What do you think of this idea? The **Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society's Annual Business Meeting** was held that night (see article).

♦ **Mar. 10 — Bad News -- Suffolk High School** had a furnace fire. Thankfully, it was contained in the boiler! **Good News -- The SNHS received \$10,000** from an anonymous donor. What a boost for the work of this society! Whoever you are, we thank you for your faith in us and we are determined to make a difference in this old town.

Getsy W. Brothman

SNHS Officers

1998-2000

President

Barbara McPhail
539-1131

1st Vice-President

Wendy Hill
934-1248

2nd Vice-President

Linda Ferguson
539-4797

Historian

Sue Woodward
539-3055

Corresponding Secretary

Mary Lawrence Harrell
539-4796

Recording Secretary

Linda Consolvo
539-4244

Treasurer

Sylvia Pond
539-2131

Assistant Treasurer

Myrtle Ann Mountcastle
539-2583

Past President

Betsy Brothers
539-6312

Save Our Station (SOS) Ad Hoc Committee

Co-chairmen:

Everett B. Birdsong
George L. Consolvo

Members:

George M. Blair
Betsy W. Brothers
James C. Caton
John C. Harrell
Randy T. Hicks
Thomas G. Hines
Donald Long
James L. McLemore, III
Barbara N. McPhail
Richard L. Pond, Jr.
Lynn K. Rose
Sue F. Woodward

Reminder

Preservation Day
Sunday, May 17, 1998
Celebrating Suffolk
100 years ago

SNHS Annual Business Meeting

Approximately 80 members gathered at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Parish Hall for our annual business meeting held March 9. Steve Herbert, Assistant City Manager for Development, gave a slide presentation and talked about the new plans for the downtown area. Everett Birdsong, Co-chairman of the Save Our Station Ad Hoc Committee, presented a station update. Treasurer Sylvia Pond reported that the society's cash assets exceed \$97,000. Elizabeth Gordon gave an update on the current membership drive and reminded people that 1998 dues "are now due." Fan Panton reported that all of the 1998 Historic Suffolk calendars have been sold.

Jane Moore, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate to serve on the 1998-2000 board: Betsy W. Brothers, Linda L. Consolvo, Linda A. Ferguson, Mary Lawrence P. Harrell, Wendy Hill, Myrtle Ann Mountcastle, Barbara N. McPhail, Sylvia B. Pond, and Sue F. Woodward. The above were elected with no nominations from the floor.

President Betsy Brothers thanked retiring board members George L. Consolvo, Elizabeth E. Gordon, and Connie R. Happel for their years of dedicated service. Their hard work and presence at monthly board meetings will be greatly missed.

We thank the following SNHS members for setting up and cleaning up: Linda Consolvo, Elizabeth Gordon, Mary Lawrence Harrell, Betsy and Tom Brothers, Pat and Dave Snyder, Sylvia Pond, Jack and Lillian Stroud, Barbara Carter, and Sue Woodward. Also, we thank Tom Brothers for making biscuits and curing the ham. Thanks to everyone who attended and brought delicious vegetables, salads, and desserts!

The following article appeared in *The Virginian-Pilot* on Saturday, January 3, 1998. Our readers might enjoy the story of Gen. Pickett and his Chuckatuck sweetheart as told in the SNHS publication *The Quiet Regiment*. This and other Society publications are available at the Riddick's Folly gift shop or by mail.

Confederate officer's wife to be reburied beside him

RICHMOND — A Confederate general's wife will be reburied in the soldiers' section of Hollywood Cemetery, the first time a woman's remains have been allowed in the burial ground of Confederate soldiers.

LaSalle Corbell Pickett, wife of Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett, will be buried next to her husband in Gettysburg Hill, a section of the cemetery named for the casualties from the Battle of Gettysburg who are interred there. Her ashes will be reinterred March 21.

Pickett is best known for "Pickett's Charge" at Gettysburg in 1863, an ill-fated rush on a fortified Union position that helped turn the tide of the war in favor of the North. Casualties in Pickett's division during the battle approached 50 percent. At his death in 1875, Pickett asked to be buried among his men in his native Richmond.

Pickett's wife died in the early 1930s and had wanted to be buried with her husband in the Hollywood Cemetery. But the Hollywood Ladies Memorial Society, which then controlled the Gettysburg Hill portion of the cemetery, wouldn't allow it, said Richmond Discoveries tour guide Jim DuPriest.

"The memorial society had a rule that no women could be buried in the soldiers' section," DuPriest said.

So she was buried in Abby Mausoleum, beside Arlington National Cemetery in Northern Virginia.



General George E. Pickett and LaSalle Corbell

Photo courtesy: Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia

Suffolk's
2nd Annual
Historic Preservation Day
May 17, 1998

"Suffolk One Hundred Years Ago"
Schedule of Events

☞ All activities will take place at Cedar Hill Cemetery unless otherwise noted*

☞ Parking will be available at Constant's Wharf

1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Riddick's Folly Tours and 1890's Exhibit

1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Historic Costume Review*
(costumes should portray styles of dress prior to the 20th Century)

2:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. Opening Ceremony

2:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Mustering of Spanish-American War Veteran's Relatives

2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Spanish-American War in Tidewater
John Quarstein-Virginia War Museum

3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Lakeland High School Chorus

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. President Theodore Roosevelt
James Foote, Re-enactor

4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Macedonia Fellowship Choir

5:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. Art Contest Awards Presentation

5:10 p.m. to 5:40 p.m. Commonwealth Chorus

- will begin at the Old Suffolk Train Station
- rain location: Birdsong Recreation Center



Other Activities:

- ☞ Clothesline Art Contest
(entries due by 4:00 p.m.)
- ☞ Trolley Tours of Historic Downtown
(tours will run every 1/2 hour beginning at 1:00, Cemetery Entrance, Main Street)
- ☞ Cemetery Tours
(2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.)
- ☞ Mini Real Estate Tour of Historic Houses
(2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.)
- ☞ Spanish-America War Displays
(1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Senior Center/American Legion Building)

Kermit Hobbs' Acceptance Speech at Marion Joyner Watson History Award Dinner

In November, SNHS joined the Tom Smith Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans, in hosting their third annual Marion Joyner Watson History Award dinner. This year's winner, Kermit Hobbs, is a past president of SNHS and author of Storm Over Suffolk and a history of First Baptist Church. He co-authored Suffolk: A Pictorial History. The following is Mr. Hobbs' acceptance of the well deserved award.

To the Tom Smith Camp of the Sons of the Confederate Veterans and to the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for what I regard as one the greatest honors I have ever received. I feel a little bit inadequate and a great deal humbled by this award; but even as I say this, I feel a sense of honor that is magnified by the great respect and indeed, love, that I have for the people who selected me for this recognition.

It is especially meaningful to me to be associated, through this award, with Marion Joyner Watson. I came to know Marion in the 'sixties when the Historical Society was being formed, and I soon recognized that she had the elements of a true historian. Not only did she have an obsessive interest and a vast knowledge of things of the past, but she was eager to share her knowledge with others. I use the term *knowledge* carefully, because Marion had a keen ability to separate historical fact from popular folklore.

In contrast to Marion the historian, I have always regarded myself as a "history buff." I have read, studied, and occasionally written history not as a serious endeavor but just because it was *fun*. Fortunately for me, there is a great deal of fun to be had from the study of history. I have had the pleasure of tramping through the woods to Civil War sites with Dr. Reginald Holland; of hunting Indian artifacts with Jim Byrd; and talking to countless people about pictures of old Suffolk. More recently, I have even gotten a kick out of dressing up as a butler at Riddick's Folly on occasion.

These past few weeks, since I was notified that I would receive this award, have been a time of introspection for me. I have tried to think just what forces prompted my interest in history. Certainly there have been a number of people who had a great influence upon me.

Some of my earliest and fondest memories are of hearing my Dad telling me and my sister, Cindy, about things that happened during his childhood, and passing along stories that had been handed down through our family from past generations. The incidents he shared with us were not of any real historic significance, but they were true experiences in the lives of real people, separated from us, not by space, but by time only.

Another person who had a great impact upon me was my sixth grade History teacher at Kings Fork School, Mrs. Mary Rush. Some of you might remember Mrs. Rush. At the time she taught my class, she was approaching retirement age, and in the eyes of us sixth graders, she seemed to be almost a relic of history brought to life. Indeed, she spoke to us with such authority and enthusiasm that we were all but convinced that she was

least an eyewitness, if not a participant, in the events she was sharing.

One more person whom I must honestly credit is Marion Watson. To me, Marion was always an encourager, especially when I talked about the possibility of my putting together a pictorial history of Suffolk. I finally decided to go on with the project when the Historical Society put on a display of old photographs we had borrowed, at the 1984 Peanut Festival. After the Festival was over, Marion brought the pictures over to my shop on a Saturday morning and spent the better part of that day helping me make photographic copies of them. This got the ball rolling, and the pictorial history did eventually become a reality.

As important as people were, there was one more great influence upon me -- the country itself. I can remember, as a child, finding minie balls in my yard and wondering how they came to be there. There were old Civil War trenches that ran through the woods near my house, where my friends and I fought many pretend battles. There was one occasion when I was running through the woods and tripped over a tree root, I accidentally popped up a perfectly formed Indian arrowhead out of the ground. It was almost as if the very land itself were crying out for someone to tell its story. Even then, the thought occurred to me that someday I might like to give it a try.

I am happy to say that I believe, we are seeing a *renaissance of historical awareness* in Suffolk. That awareness is, to a great extent, the result of the efforts of many of the people in this room. The commitment that our community has made to restore our train station and the refurbishing of private homes on North Main Street give evidence of our growing interest in preserving our past. As Building and Grounds Chairman of the Riddick's Folly Board, I would like to give credit to the City of Suffolk for its excellent support for paint and other renovations that are currently underway on this fine landmark.

Some people regard history as merely the story of where we have been and how we came to be where we are. But it is really a great deal more. Our history tells us *who we are*, and more than that, *it provides us with a vision of what we can be*.

History can be a source of interesting and exciting entertainment, but its more important value is that it be a guiding influence upon the development of our culture. I commend the organizations represented here tonight for serving that purpose.

Once again, for this great honor and for this opportunity to speak to you, I offer my sincerest appreciation. Thank you.

Scenes from 1997 Candlelight Tour

Darden Farmstead



Hostess Nancy Dempsey tells guests about the lovely front hall at the recently restored Darden Farmstead.



On a cold day, Dr. George Barnett warmly welcomes guests to the home of Billy and Maria Bell.

Indika Farms



St. Nick (Leroy Edwards) and friend survey the countryside at dusk at Indika Farms.



Tour hostesses Stella Payne and Debbie Chappell admire Dot Gwaltney's dining room.

Exeter Place



Civil War re-enactors Mr. & Mrs. Frank Earnest (center) share war news at their wedding reception.



Exeter Place parlor hostesses Jan Reed, Stacy Hern, and Amy Chaplow look beautiful in Civil War period dresses.



Candlelight Christmas Tour 1997

Celebrating the Holidays Along the Western Branch of the Nansemond
Scott Farmstead



Kermit & Earlene Hobbs sell tickets while Edie Higinbotham greets visitors to the Scott Farmstead.



Homeowner Peggy Wright with friends Janice Thomas and Dot Gwaltney are busy decorating.

The Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society is very indebted to the following:

Homeowners

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Bell (Darden Farmstead)
Mrs. William Gwaltney (Indika Farms)
Mr. and Mrs. Glynn Moore (Exeter Place)
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wright (Scott Farmstead)

House Chairmen

Margie Moore & Margaret Simmons
Annette Bailey & Lisa Amos
Lynn Rose & Denise Spady
Linda Ferguson

Garden Clubs

Nansemond River
Westover
Suffolk
Riverview

Special Attractions

Quilting Guild & Weaver Mary Scott
Riddick's Folly Gift Shop
Ham Curing - Peter Pruden & Tom Brothers

Civil War Re-enactors

Frank & Billie Earnest and friends
Jessie Gundry

Churches Open for Tour

Providence United Methodist Church and Woodland United Methodist Church

Other People in Charge

Dana Adams, Diane Boone, Betsy Brothers, Heather Burns, Linda Consolvo, Mary Darden
Virginia Dare Fisher, Sharyn Flintoff, Mary Lawrence Harrell, Pearl Harrell, Kermit Hobbs, Pattie Jack
Lee King, Barbara McPhail, Georgellen Monette, Doug Naismith, Fan Panton, Sylvia Pond, Pat Rountree
Joan Scott, Pat Snyder, Sharry Swann, Debbie Williams, Sue Williams, and Sue Woodward

And the many, many special people who made this wonderful tour possible

Brochure and Ticket Sponsors, Tickets Sellers, Hosts and Hostesses, Decorators, and Church Van Drivers

Riddick's Folly Gift Shop

If you haven't been to the Folly's gift shop lately, you've missed a treat. This shop, located in the English basement where the old kitchen was, is brimming with unique gifts. In addition to our publications and prints, this shop sells a wonderful selection of "Suffolk items." Prints of Suffolk High School and Main Street Methodist Church; *Suffolk - A Pictorial History* by Kermit Hobbs, and Fillmore Norfleet's *Suffolk in Virginia c. 1795-1840*, *Siege of Suffolk*, and area cookbooks are but a few of the things you can find there. Also, notecards, postcards, handmade dolls, local pottery, Virginia Metalcrafters items, peanuts, wooden replicas of buildings that are or were in Suffolk, and Lee Sutton's streetscape are for sale.

To get an order form or for information, please call (757)934-1390 or write to Riddick's Folly, P.O. Box 1722, Suffolk, VA 23439-1722.

1998 SNHS Membership Roster (as of April 6)

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Donations to the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

(Gifts received after October, 1997 newsletter was printed.)

Memorial gift for **Eliza Everett Darden** given by Mr. & Mrs. James E. Gordon
Memorial gift for **Art E. Lewis** (to Save Our Station Fund) given by Mrs. A. E. Lewis
Memorial gift for **Ted J. LoCascio** (to Save Our Station Fund) given by Mr. & Mrs. Tom S. Brothers
Preservation Fund Donations - Anonymous Gift and Anonymous Trust



Main Street Depot - Suffolk, Virginia
C. 1885

The following speech was written by 11-year-old Sarah McLemore, a sixth grade student at Nansemond-Suffolk Academy, for a forensic competition. Sarah's father, Jim, is a local attorney and a model train buff who serves on the Save Our Station Ad Hoc Committee. Sarah's great-grandfather Judge James L. McLemore was president of the National Bank for 52 years (see newsletter story on Suffolk banks).

Save the Suffolk Train Station

Hello! My name is Sarah McLemore and I am here to tell you about the old Suffolk Train Station - that **desperately** needs to be saved. The Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society is trying to restore this train station and the citizens should join in with their support!!!

The Suffolk Train Station is a 115 year old building. It was built in the Queen Anne style of architecture. It represents much of the history of Suffolk. It was built in 1885 by the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. It was used in World War I and II to transport troops. At one time, 7 railroads passed through Suffolk from the port of Norfolk to everywhere in the United States.

A few years ago the Seaboard Railroad wanted to tear down the station because it was in bad condition. People were loitering around the railroad. Vagrants were using the station. In 1994, part of the station was destroyed by fire.

The station has been temporarily saved by the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society. When the society heard the railroad was going to tear it down, they decided to buy the station -- restore it -- and make it into a museum.

Saving the station is an important part of a plan to save many of the older buildings remaining in downtown Suffolk. During the 1960s through 1980s, **many** of the old buildings in downtown Suffolk were destroyed and replaced with parking lots or modern buildings. Other older buildings that remained are falling apart, are unpainted and just major eyesores.

Suffolk needs to save these buildings. They are important to its history. Saving the station will be **the spark** to save these buildings.

The Historical Society's preservation efforts helped with the restoration of Riddick's Folly, a mansion built before the Civil War. Also several citizens bought some of the other old homes and have restored them. The train station was in the middle of all of this restoration.

It was important to the area's preservation because the railroads had played a big part in the history of Suffolk. So when the Historical Society heard the station was going to be TORN down, they decided to act to save the station.

They bought the station from the railroad. However, because of fire damage, it will cost around \$300,000 to repair.

But where is the money coming from? \$240,000 is from ISTEAs grants. ISTEAs stands for Inter Modal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act. The City of Suffolk has said it will donate \$30,000. The Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society said it will donate \$30,000 as well. This may be enough money to restore the train station, but once restored, there won't be enough money to run it.

With only four years to complete the restoration of the station, some say it is a hopeless cause. But if the station can be restored and the money raised to run the station, it will mean a **worthwhile addition to the cultural heritage of our city**.

So, I hope you will join me in saying "SAVE THE SUFFOLK TRAIN STATION."

Hats off to the Suffolk Woman's Club! Their recent donation of \$500.00 to SOS brings the total of their contributions to \$2,000.00.



Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please circle dues amount and print name(s) exactly as you want listed on roster.

Membership

Level	Individual	Couple
Benefactor	\$200	\$300
Sponsor	\$100	\$150
Patron	\$75	\$100
Friend	\$50	\$75
Contributing Member	\$15	\$25

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please return membership form and check to:

Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

Post Office Box 1255

Suffolk, Virginia 23439-1255

The Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society is
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A Note from the New President

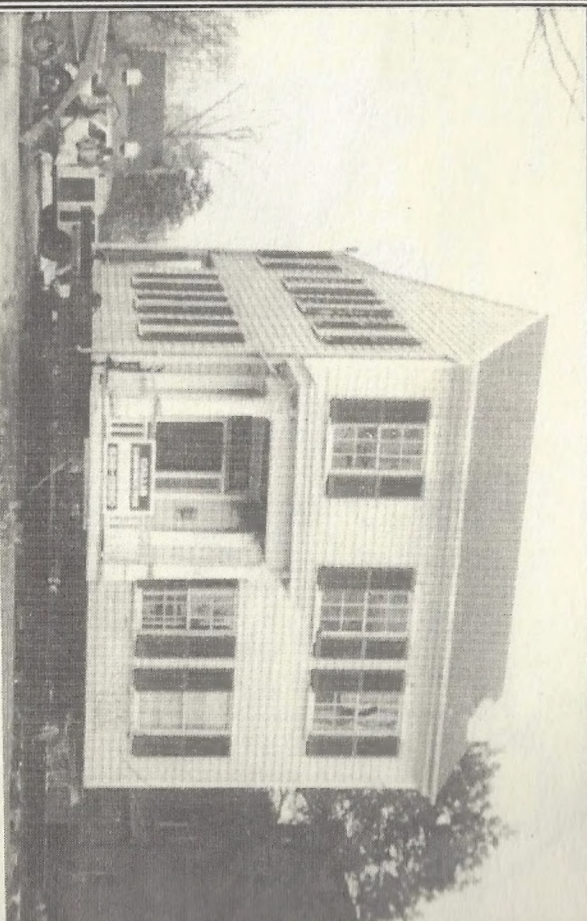
It is with great humility and reservation that I have accepted the position of president of the SNHS. I say this because, for the last several years, I have had the unique experience and privilege of shadowing Betsy Brothers as she tirelessly went about the business of being your president.

None of us can thank her enough for the wonderful progress she has made promoting preservation and raising public awareness of the rich history of Suffolk.

She and her sidekick Sue Woodward have paved the way for the Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society to move into the next century with great respect and support from the community.

These are big shoes to fill and Betsy deserves a huge "thank you" from all of us.

Barbara Norfleet McPhail



Pat and Dave Snyder's house at 220 N. Main Street recently was moved approximately 50 feet north of its original site adjacent to the Suffolk Christian Church.

HATS OFF!

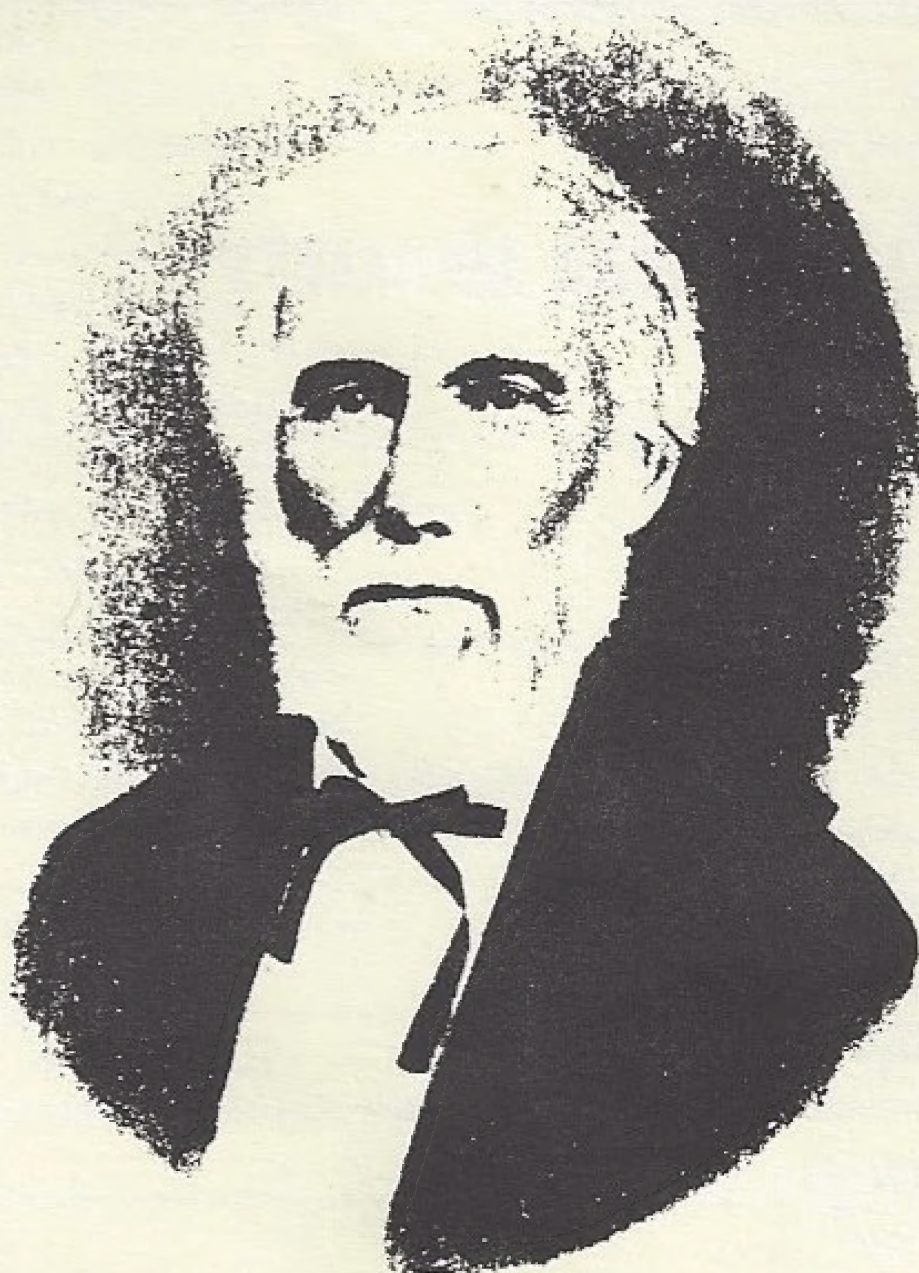
... to Pat and Dave Snyder--patient and proud owners of the van Valkenburgh house (c. 1850)

... to The City of Suffolk, Ray Gindroz, and the Greater Downtown Development Committee for the exciting new plans, street lights, and trees

... to the newly organized Clay/Saratoga Street Civic Association

Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

Post Office Box 1255
Suffolk, Virginia 23439-1255



*Col. John Copeland was a founder
of the Farmers Bank of Nansemond
(now Crestar Bank) in 1870.*